1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

4. Occupational hunters: lowland border peoples; negroid ex-slaves; all non-Coptic.

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The occupational hunting tribes are considered the most primitive, as pre-agricultural and even pre-pastoral subsisters on the bush, jungle, river gorges and deserts. Among them are the Woyto, the hunters of the Hippopotamus, which is considered by the Coptic clergy especially unclean because of the similarity to the pig. Jungles like Wolkait, in northwest Begemdir, contain such despised and feared hunters, as does the eastern lowland desert of the Danakil (Afar).

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Considered on a somewhat higher level within these groups are the pastoral nomads like the Somali, some of the Borana, and other southern tribes who, when they are better known to settled neighbors, are equated with class 2. When less well known, they are classed not much above hunters, and it does not matter to the Amhara that the pastoral nomads in turn look down on settled peasants.

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The lowest on level four are the ex-slaves, who are referred to as Shanqalla if they look negroid, or the more general "barya", i.e. slave (name of a Sudanese border tribe). Only a very poor person, possibly an outcast, cripple, etc., of the two upper classes would consider marrying a Shanqalla. Nevertheless, because of the aforementioned concubinage with female slaves, there are Shanqalla outcrops among even the Amhara of Gondar. An offspring of such a union not infrequently does marry a Shanqalla woman, after converting her to Coptic Christianity. This is pos-

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sible in modern times, though the conversion is solemnized shamefacedly by the minor clergy and with very little ado. The racial distinctions between "persons of dishonorable ancestry" are expressed in the following Amharic aphorisms:

> "(One) of unknown father
> (Two) wellaj (i.e. father Amhara, Mother Shanqalla:
> (Three) barya (i.e. full-blooded slave);
> (Four) gabecha (any half-breed, incl. half-Italian)."

In setting them side by side without distinction, the aphorism warns the hearer to look well into the ancestry of a prospective mate, for he or she may be descended from any of these classifications.

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European foreigners are not included in these classifications, especially if they belong to nationalities of recent contact with Ethiopians. But the Armenians, in contact for many centuries, appear in the upper infidel group (the term"arämani" had the connotation of "idolator, hence Cruel"). Today some of the modern Ethiopian nationalists pretend to despise them as "moneybags", while actually envying their commercial and professional talents. The term "arab" has long meant trader, caravan importer, slave dealer. The term for Protestant, probably of 19th century origin, means "enemy of Mary", because that is what impressed the Coptic Amhara most when the missionaries preached to them at that time. The old term "färänj (Frank), foreigner, is still in use, and in rural spots children will still sometimes run after a foreigner pointing fingers as if he were a strange, hence inferior, animal. But in urban usage, especially in Addis Ababa, the term is now applied officially without any derogatory connotations.

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real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Darya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian coifather who would henceforth protect him from sale and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

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567 then a slave had no legal personality and his master was responsible for any damages or crimes he might commit.

Though it was illegal, no one interfered with a master who killed his non-Christian slave. The offspring of an Amhara father and slave mother had full legitimacy and rights of inheritance, but the child of a free woman and a male slave--a rarity--remained a slave and belonged to whoever had rights over her, i.e. her husband, or her parents if she was unmarried. In the province of Godjam a slave could own his own skins, till allocated field of his own in own spare time, and trade his grain on the market, so that he resembled a serf of medieval Europe, but belonged to his master, not to the soil.

464 567 Much of the labor available today in the rural Amhara provinces, especially Begemder, is of Shanqalla or semi-Shanqalla and half-Barya origin (i.e. with an Amhara father and ex-slave mother). There are many of these half-negroids because of generations of concubinage, and because of the simplicity of the ecological life of the Amhara which can be regarded as a levelling factor, and good harvests or wartime famines were almost equally enjoyed or suffered by master as well as slave. Free Amhara peasant women and slave women did the same type of work, even crushed barley together at the same time in the same hollow treetrunk (a frequent scene in paintings). Liberation, in the past, of individual slaves, was rare, for not only was it a loss to the master equal to 3 pairs of oxen, or ateb good huts, or

464 an entire harvest, but the slave would suddenly find
567 himself without a protector, without food and shelter, separated from his own (Shanqalla) people since birth and not knowing their language or their customs.

When liberation was decreed by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1941/2, many ex-slaves remained with their old masters or attached themselves as retainers to a new one, to have a basic livelihood and protection in court against hurt or insult from strangers. The fact that slave trading had been forbidden by Haile Selassie since 1924, and been gradually enforced since then, had increased the personal attachment of slaves not only to the master but to his entire extended family from which they could no longer be sold. After 1942, those ex-slaves who did leave their former masters often settled in makeshift shacks in towns, usually in the section formerly assigned to Muslims, and they now constitute an important potential labor supply in the towns.

463 The second category[1] includes semi-specializations
464 of some poorer Coptic Amhara who, in addition to some farming, do such work as making charcoal ("käsäl" or "dengay Käsäl"), as soon as themajor harvest is over. They then move in small teams, usually kinfolk, into the drying river valleys where suitable wood is more plentiful, and later sell their product in towns, to restaurateurs, on the big and little markets, or to smiths and potters. Since this trade is "one that anyone can learn", non-occult, there is nothing slavish about it to the mind of the Amhara, and the loss of

[1] [of part time labor (see p.215, cat. 116).-Analyst]

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671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendmants, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law [588] usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, sometimes in the form of "dämoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nägäst" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the conditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the King could be punished by blinding. A father had the right of life and death over [593] his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The [567] latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense would be the hanging of the master

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not legal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

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C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yägälatē danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Kayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun,it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and amei-negroid ex-
[797] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
• 567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, peoples on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Guara sub-province, just below the western, old-
[588] Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded ex-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool of unskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of the old Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, especially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by marrying polygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Christian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

563 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity"
567 (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of
797 "atte[illegible]tam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attached as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Kəzäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newlywed couple, within the kin group.

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565 f. The Servant Class and Economic Considerations

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

795 Some dabtära have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [386] made of soot, charcoat, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [776] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susnecs, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [567] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive framework of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the merchant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Lowest in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

11;Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *tajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *tallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics.

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men."

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics.

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions:

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shĭr* ("appoint-demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of the maritime province (*bähr nagäsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high demand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuännent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

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Preferred
[243] cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.